



Testimony by Dr. Cesarina Thompson
Interim Associate Dean
School of Health & Human Services,
Professor, Dept. of Nursing
Southern Connecticut State University
Before the Public Health Committee

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter and members of the Public Health Committee, for the record I am Dr. Cesarina Thompson, Chair of Nursing at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven. Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today on Senate Bill 1202, *An Act Concerning the State's Health Care Workforce*. I strongly support such an initiative to enhance access to quality health care for the citizens of Connecticut. The Affordable Care Act (ACA) passed by Congress last year calls for improving the accessibility of care, strengthening the provision of primary care and enhancing interdisciplinary coordination to improve health outcomes. A state-wide effort to assess the health care needs would be a step in the right direction in improving health care access and quality in Connecticut.

As the largest segment of the health care workforce, nursing has been the focus of workforce strategies locally and nationally. Over the past several years, Connecticut State University System (CSUS) institutions that offer nursing programs have implemented a number of strategies to address the continuing shortage of registered nurses through the expansion of existing programs, launching new traditional and accelerated programs, and developing a collaborative online doctoral program to prepare more nursing faculty. In fact, the proposal for the doctoral program in nursing education (EdD) was developed in less than one year to respond to the critical shortage of nurse faculty. However, we are still waiting a decision on this program from the Department of Higher Education which has had our proposal since July 2010.

CSUS remains committed to addressing the State's workforce needs through the establishment of innovative programs that are accessible and affordable and looks forward to collaborating with other public institutions and agencies to better meet the health care needs of the State. For example, members of CSUS institutions have participated on the Allied Health Workforce Board and I currently serve on the Board's Workforce Investment Strategies Group that is specifically charged to produce a statewide health care workforce plan, coordinate health care workforce planning efforts and identify ways to improve data collection and data sharing.

I cannot emphasize enough the need for data collection and analysis as fundamental to the development of a comprehensive plan to address the State's Health Care Workforce. Decisions to establish or expand programs in the health professions must be based on solid evidence that supports the need for such programs. For example, the lack of robust nursing workforce data in our State has been documented by nursing professional organizations for several years and yet we are still awaiting the implementation of a plan to gather and analyze such data. There is a similar need to gather and analyze data in other health professions. I strongly urge you to consider including workforce data collection and analysis as an essential component of this bill.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jill E. Ferraiolo, CSUS Associate Vice Chancellor for Government Relations/Communications, at 860-493-0017. Thank you.